

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet of drawings include formal versions of FIGS. 1, 2A, 2B, 4 and 5 and replaces the original sheet of drawings including FIGS. 1, 2A, 2B, 4 and 5.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, and 6-10 are pending. By this Amendment, the specification, drawings and claim 1 are amended.

Reconsideration based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. The Drawings Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the drawings based on informalities. The drawings and specification are amended to obviate this objection. Applicant notes that the claims as amended no longer recite a core, so that the drawings do not need to illustrate this feature. Withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

II. The Description Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the description based on informalities. In order to obviate this objection, a clean copy of the Abstract is submitted herewith. Withdrawal of the objection to the description is respectfully requested.

III. The Claims Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to claims 1, 3 and 6-9 based on informalities. Claim 1 is amended to obviate this objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the claims is respectfully requested.

IV. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 6-10, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Trokhan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,547,747). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Trokhan does not disclose or even suggest an absorbent article including, *inter alia*, a barrier layer, a cover layer extending substantially parallel to the barrier layer, and a superabsorbent polymer disposed directly on the barrier layer, the superabsorbent polymer being adhered to the article in a pattern configured to distribute fluid in the absorbent article, wherein at least one portion of the absorbent article extending essentially completely across the absorbent article is substantially devoid of the superabsorbent polymer, as recited in claim 1. As explained in the present application, this configuration is effective in preventing gel blocking in the area of the core that is in initial contact with the body fluid.

The Trokhan '747 patent discloses a method of forming an absorbent structure including forming regions of topographically different elevations on a capillary substrate, and then applying an absorbent onto elevated regions of the substrate so that patterns of absorbent are formed on the substrate. See col. 2, lines 38-64 of the Trokhan '747 Patent. The Trokhan '747 patent discloses incorporating the absorbent structure into the core of an absorbent article, but does not disclose disposing the SAP directly on a barrier layer, as required by the claimed invention.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance. The dependent claims are also in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed as well as for the additional features they recite.

Prompt and favorable consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 01-1785.

Respectfully submitted,

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